



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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## VEGETABLE FEATURE: Escarole

By Chef Andrea

This week's featured vegetable is escarole. Many people mistake escarole for a head of green leaf lettuce. While they do look very similar, they have some differences. For starters, escarole is in the chicory family and is considered to be a bitter green. Escarole is a frost tolerant green, which is why we plant them as a late season crop. Cool temperatures result in a more balanced flavor in this vegetable. If you eat a little bit of the leaf when raw, you will notice it has a mild bitterness. While escarole may be eaten raw, I think this vegetable shines at its best when cooked. When you cook escarole, the green wilts down into a smooth, silky green and the flavor mellows out so it is more balanced, slightly sweet and less bitter. The center leaves are sometimes light green or slightly yellow and the outer leaves are more broad and a bit more thick when compared to leaf lettuce. If you are going to use escarole raw, I recommend using the center leaves for raw preparations as they are often more tender.

Escarole is a popular green in Italian cuisine. There's a classic preparation for escarole that some Italian cooks call Scarola Affogata, which means "smothered escarole." In this dish, garlic is sautéed in olive oil until golden, then chopped escarole, salt, red pepper flakes and seasoning are added to the pan. The greens are cooked until they are soft and tender. This is then served as side dish, or you can use the greens for another purpose, such as on top of a pizza as we've done in this week's recipe, **White Bean and Escarole Pizza**.

Escarole is also often used in winter soups along with white beans and other

vegetables. This week one of our featured recipes is for a classic **Italian Wedding Soup**. This soup actually has nothing to do with weddings. It has its origins as a peasant soup made to make use of meat scraps, stale bread and basic vegetables all cooked in a flavorful broth. One thing that makes this soup unique and kind of fun is that it includes mini meatballs which are traditionally made with pork, but you could also use ground chicken or turkey if you prefer.

Escarole pairs well with other fall vegetables and fruits such as apples, pears, persimmons, lemons, oranges, garlic, onions, beets, potatoes and butternut squash. It is also often included in dishes with white beans and lentils. Additionally, it pairs well with hazelnuts and walnuts as well as butter, prosciutto, bacon, cheese (including blue cheese, Parmesan, and gruyere).

Store escarole in a plastic bag in the refrigerator until ready to use. You will need to wash the leaves well in the same way you would wash head lettuce. The heads we're delivering this week weigh on average between 0.75-1.0 pounds each.

## What's In The Box?

**ITALIAN GARLIC:** No time to mince garlic? Smash it using the wide, flat part of the back of the knife. Lay the knife flat on top of the cloves of garlic and give it a gentle whack with the palm of your hand. This will break up the cloves which will then fall apart when you cook them.

**SALAD MIX:** Enjoy the convenience of this mix to put dinner on the table quickly. Toss with an Asian vinaigrette along with shredded carrots and add cooked chicken or beef to make an entrée salad for dinner.

**BABY ARUGULA:** This is our final crop of the season. Enjoy an arugula salad with apples or pears and candied walnuts.

**JALAPEÑO PEPPERS:** There are three jalapeños in this week's box. In this week's Cooking With the Box article you'll find a recipe for **Honey-Lime Jalapeño vinaigrette**. Use it as a salad dressing or a marinade for grilled chicken or fish.

**CAULIFLOWER OR BROCCOLI ROMANESCO:** This week your box will contain either white, yellow or purple cauliflower or broccoli Romanesco. All may be used interchangeably in recipes.

**BROCCOLI:** Use this to make the **Parmesan Roasted Broccoli** featured in this week's Cooking With the Box.

**MINI SWEET PEPPERS:** We're almost finished picking peppers for the year. Use these as a dipper for hummus.

**PURPLE FRENCH BREAKFAST RADISHES:** The radishes are pretty spicy right now...and of course don't forget to use the greens!

**BABY WHITE TURNIPS:** The turnips and the greens are mild and tender enough to eat raw or lightly cooked. The best part about them is you can have a vegetable side dish on the table in 10 minutes!

**ORANGE CARROTS:** We finished our carrot harvest for the season earlier this week! We had a bountiful harvest and will have plenty of carrots to include in boxes through the end of the season.

**PURPLE MAJESTY POTATOES:** These potatoes have purple skin and purple flesh. This is a waxy potato variety most appropriate for roasting or pan-frying.

**YELLOW ONIONS:** In my kitchen, I can never have too many onions. Use them raw in salads, cook them slowly to make sweet, caramelized onions, or sweat them in butter or oil and use them to flavor rice.

**ESCAROLE:** Read more about this unique fall green in this week's **Vegetable Feature article**. It may be eaten both raw and cooked. If you don't care for the slight bitterness of the raw leaves, try it cooked.

## Italian Wedding Soup

Yield: 8 servings

### **Meatballs:**

1 small onion, finely chopped  
1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley or 1 Tbsp dried parsley  
1 large egg  
1 tsp minced garlic  
1 tsp salt  
1 slice fresh white bread, crust trimmed, bread torn into small pieces

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 pound ground pork  
Freshly ground black pepper

### **Soup:**

12 cups chicken broth  
2 cups carrots, small dice  
1 pound escarole, coarsely chopped  
2 large eggs  
2 Tbsp freshly grated Parmesan, plus extra for garnish  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. **To make the meatballs:** Stir the first 6 ingredients in a large bowl to blend. Stir in the cheese, pork and pepper. Using 1 1/2 tsp for each, shape the meat mixture into 1-inch diameter meatballs. Place on a baking sheet and bake in a 350°F oven until lightly browned.
2. **To make the soup:** Bring the broth to a boil in a large pot over medium high heat. Add the meatballs, carrots and escarole and simmer until the meatballs are cooked through and the escarole is tender, about 8-12 minutes.
3. Whisk the eggs and cheese in a medium bowl to blend. Stir the soup in a circular motion. Gradually drizzle the egg mixture into the moving broth, stirring gently with a fork to form thin strands of egg, about 1 minute. Season the soup to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Ladle the soup into bowls and serve. Finish soup with parmesan cheese if desired.

Recipe adapted from Giada De Laurentiis's recipe found at [www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com).

## White Bean & Escarole Pizza

Yield: 4 servings

### **Bean Puree:**

2-3 cloves garlic  
2 cups cooked cannellini beans  
3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tsp salt  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
1 tsp dried parsley  
1/2 tsp dried oregano  
1 Tbsp lemon juice

### **Escarole:**

1 1/2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced  
2-3 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 of a large head of escarole (8 oz)  
1-2 pinches red pepper flakes  
1 1/2 tsp red wine vinegar  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### **Pizza:**

Pizza Dough, enough to make a 12-14 inch crust  
Olive oil, additional as needed for the crust and finishing  
2-3 oz pepperoni or salami (optional)  
3 oz shredded Parmesan cheese

1. While you make the toppings for the pizza, preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. First make the bean puree. Place garlic cloves in a food processor and blend until the garlic is finely chopped. Add the beans, olive oil, salt, pepper, parsley, oregano and lemon juice. Blend until the beans are smooth and all the ingredients are well combined. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Set aside for 5-10 minutes to let the flavors develop, then taste the beans and adjust the seasoning to your liking by adding salt, pepper, vinegar and/or lemon juice as needed. The consistency of the beans should be smooth and spreadable. Thin with a few tablespoons of water or a little more olive oil if needed.
3. Next, prepare the escarole. Heat 1 1/2 Tbsp olive oil in a medium sauté pan over medium heat. When the oil shimmers, add the onions and garlic. Sauté until the vegetables are softened, then add the escarole. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle in the red pepper flakes. Stir to combine and continue to stir periodically as the escarole wilts down. Once the escarole is wilted, add the red wine vinegar and continue to cook until nearly all the liquid is reduced. Adjust the seasoning to your liking. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Shape the dough and place it on a preheated pizza stone or pizza pan. Brush the crust with olive oil and bake for 10 minutes.
5. Remove the par-baked crust from the oven. Spread the bean puree evenly on the crust. Depending on the size of your pizza, you may not need all of the bean puree. Save any unused portion and use it elsewhere. If you are using pepperoni or salami, lay it out on top of the bean puree. Evenly distribute the escarole on top of the crust. Top off the pizza by spreading shredded Parmesan over the whole pizza.
6. Return the pizza to the oven and bake it an additional 15-20 minutes or until the crust and cheese are golden brown.
7. Cut into 8 pieces and serve hot.

Recipe by Chef Andrea, Harmony Valley Farm.